



Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass

Panicum virgatum L.



Southlow Michigan Germplasm Switchgrass

The USDA-NRCS Rose Lake Plant Materials Center (PMC), the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources released a source-identified ecotype of switchgrass in 2001 for the Great Lakes region.

Description

Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass has features consistent with the species. It is a perennial, warm-season bunch grass with short, hard, scaly rhizomes. Stems are erect, often reddish to purplish at the base and can reach a height of seven feet. A dense mat of white, silky hairs extends from the ligules onto the upper leaf surface. The inflorescence is open, freely branched, and pyramidal.

Source

Seed was collected from 11 native stands (as designated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division) of switchgrass within the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Conservation Uses

Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass is useful as a renewable fuel source and as a component in the restoration and diversification of native habitats, particularly in Southern Michigan, its source of origin. Michigan NRCS technical specialists have determined that Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass is useful or potentially useful with these Conservation Practice Standards:

- Conservation Cover (327)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Early Successional Habitat
- Development/Management (647)
- Field Border (386)
- Filter Strip (393)
- Forage and Biomass Planting (512)
- Hedgerow Planting (422)
- Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643)
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)

Area of Adaptation and Use

This species is found in dry to moist open areas throughout much of the United States and is a major component of tall and mixed grass prairies. Its primary utilization area is the southern Great Lakes area.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass can be established by seed. Seed can be planted with a grain drill or broadcast and cultipacked. Seeding rate for switchgrass is 2 to 5 lbs/a PLS. Care should be taken to limit seeding depth to no more than ¼ inch in most soils.

Weed control during establishment is critical. Mowing and use of registered herbicides will aid in weed control. Always read and follow herbicide label directions.

Ecological Considerations

No economically important insects or diseases have been observed on Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass.



Close-up of Southlow Michigan Germplasm Switchgrass



Field of Southlow Michigan Germplasm Switchgrass

Seed and Plant Production

Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass produces seed annually. Seed can be harvested mechanically with a combine. Timing is critical as mature seed can fall off of the plant. Seed cleaning can be done using a fanning mill.



Field of Southlow Michigan Germplasm Switchgrass

Availability

Southlow Michigan Germplasm switchgrass, as well as other Rose Lake PMC releases, is available from commercial suppliers. Rose Lake PMC does not sell releases to the general public, although small quantities of seed are available to commercial seed or nursery growers for increase purposes.

For more information, contact:
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Citation

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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